

in nearby Maldon Road, said: "It would be an absolute nightmare if they did that."

"We already get all the commuters who want to go to London on the train parking here in the morning. If we get Tesco traffic coming through here as well, it would ruin our street."

David Greene, 74, of the same road, added: "I really hope they look elsewhere. This should be a quiet street."

"It's not designed for lots of extra traffic."

The Tesco development, which has been in the pipeline for more than four years, was expected to be approved without many problems when the proposals were unveiled in March.

However, the entire scheme was derailed earlier this month when council officers revealed the surrounding roads could not cope with the planned 7,771sqm, three-storey store.

Despite Tesco chiefs proposing to leave a third of the supermarket unused and cutting its 540-space car park to 360 spaces, the compromise could not persuade councillors to grant planning permission.

Duncan Russell (Lib Dem, Blenheim Park) said: "We are already on a knife edge in terms of the traffic around that area."

"This would take us over the edge. It would be a complete disaster and we would be blamed for it."

Brian Kelly (Con, Southchurch), the chairman of the development control committee, added: "While I can see this proposal having many benefits, I cannot push through a resolution without this being sorted out."

The decision was deferred.

The next meeting of the development control committee scheduled for September 14. However it is not yet known if a new Tesco plan will be ready in time.

■ **HAVING FUN** – Friends of Ockendon Recreation Park organised a sports day for youngsters, which included tennis, cricket, football and bowls. In the picture are Ben Ely, Ethan, Sam, Bill Grick and James McGregor with coach James Burroughs

Picture: MAXINE CLARKE BA48698

Travellers petition PM to halt eviction

By JON AUSTIN

jon.austin@q2.com

TRAVELLERS were today handing over a petition signed by 1,600 people calling on Prime Minister David Cameron to block the looming eviction of Dale Farm.

Representatives of the Crays Hill illegal site, which houses about 96 families, were travelling to Downing Street as the August 31 deadline for them to leave gets ever closer.

The campaigners were being supported by Lib Dem peer Lord Avebury and the Irish Traveller Movement at the handover of the petition.

1,600 want David Cameron to step in and prevent council's clearance of illegal pitches

The group is also hoping the United Nations Commission for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination will this week pass a resolution urging a delay in the eviction until alternative land can be found.

The commission heard passionate pleas against the eviction from Dale Farm spokesman Richard Sheridan on Tuesday who led a delegation from the site to Geneva.

Grattan Puxon, a campaigner

for the site, said: "This is the call for all to join together to defend travellers' rights, and the rights of everyone being made homeless by the actions of a foolish and brutal council, backed by an even worse Government."

"Dale Farm is the test case for us all. Together we can see that homes are not destroyed, and that commonsense prevails."

Mr Puxon added four women expecting babies were due to give birth by August 31.

He added: "We are seeking an injunction to halt the eviction, so everyone can move peacefully to alternative caravan parks."

Mr Puxon added a planning application for a new travellers' site in Gardiners Lane South in Basildon is still awaiting a response from Basildon Council.

EVICTION PUTS SPEED LIMIT ON A127: PAGE 11

Last-ditch bid to remain at Dale Farm

THE handover of the petition comes in the same week traveller Mary Flynn launched a last-ditch bid to stay at Dale Farm.

Mrs Flynn, aged in her 70s, has submitted the first of a new wave of planning applications for the site.

Lawyers for the widow will apply for an injunction against her pitch being cleared until the planning application is

considered by Basildon Council.

Travellers hope that if the move is successful, it could be extended to cover other homes there.

Mrs Flynn has also been notified she will have a High Court hearing in November to challenge the accommodation being offered by the council after she is evicted.

She argues her nomadic back-

ground means evicted travellers should not be offered houses or flats, but should ensure another caravan pitch.

In another development, a public inquiry has been set for November 22 to consider an appeal by the families against Basildon Council's refusal of planning permission this month for a 12-pitch site off Church Road, Laindon.

It would have provided alternative accommodation for the most vulnerable families facing eviction from Dale Farm, according to the travellers.

Council leader Tony Ball maintains the travellers are being ill advised by activists that there is a chance they will be able to stay, and instead hopes they will leave by choice to avoid the misery of the evictions.